# The Blacksmith in Society
# Lesson Plan # 4 - The Price of Freedom

**Teacher's Background**

Slaves were property, and as such had value. However, slaves who were also skilled craftsmen were difficult to replace and commanded the highest prices. Slave owners often maximized their investment by apprenticing young slaves to craftsmen, including blacksmiths, to learn a trade. The slave apprentices often spent years learning a skill and living in relative freedom. Once returned to the master, these slaves were more likely than most to: negotiate with the master so that he could work freely for an annual fee, work overtime to purchase his freedom and/or the freedom of his family, or escape. This lesson shows that it was extremely difficult for slaves to purchase freedom, making escape an attractive alternative.

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**Goal**

After reading and analyzing the suggested materials, students will understand that the technical training given certain slaves increased their value both as a worker and a commodity, and decreased the likelihood of manumission by their owners.

**Objectives**

- To show students how slaves were utilized and marketed to meet the economic needs of the slave owner.
- To acquaint students with strategies slaves utilized to gain freedom, i.e., purchase of their time, purchase of family members or self, escape or manumission.
- To demonstrate the earning potential of a typical 19th century blacksmith.
- To introduce documentation, written by slaves, describing the working conditions and life-styles of slaves.

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**This activity addresses the following Maryland Learning Outcomes**

For Grades 4-5

**#1 Social Studies Skills**

**Students will demonstrate an understanding of historical and current events using chronological and spatial thinking, develop historical interpretations, and frame questions that include collecting and evaluating information from primary and secondary sources.**

- Apply and organize information specific to social studies disciplines by reading, asking questions, and observing. (MLO 1.2)
- Interpret and organize primary and secondary sources of information including pictures, graphics, maps, atlases, artifacts, timelines, political cartoons, videotapes, journals, and government documents. (MLO 1.3)
- Identify and analyze the causes and effects of historic events. (MLO 1.4)
- Make decisions and analyze decisions of individuals, groups, and institutions. (MLO 1.5)
- Analyze the impact of social institutions and the media on the behavior of individuals and groups. (MLO 1.8)

## #4 Economics

**Students will develop economic reasoning to understand the historical development and current status of economic principles, institutions, and processes needed to be effective citizens, consumers, and workers participating in local communities, the nation, and the world.**

- Explain how limited resources and unlimited economic wants cause people to choose certain goods and services and give up others. (MLO 4.1)

## #5 Political Systems

**Students will understand the historical development and current status of the fundamental concepts and processes of authority, power, and influence, with particular emphasis on the founding documents of the United States and the democratic skills and attitudes necessary to become responsible citizens.**

- Give examples of how the rule of law has impacted the rights and responsibilities of people. (MLO 5.1)

For Grades 6-8

## #1 Social Studies Skills

**Students will demonstrate an understanding of historical and current events using chronological and spatial thinking, develop historical interpretations, and frame questions that include collecting and evaluating information from primary and secondary sources.**

- Evaluate and organize information specific to social studies disciplines by reading, asking questions, investigating, or observing. (MLO 1.2)
- Interpret, evaluate, and organize primary and secondary sources of information including pictures, graphics, maps, atlases, artifacts, timelines, political cartoons, videotapes, journals, and government documents. (MLO 1.3)
- Make decisions and analyze decisions of individuals, groups, and institutions in other times and places and evaluate the consequences. (MLO 1.5)
- Analyze issues by stating and summarizing the issue, evaluating different viewpoints, and drawing conclusions based on data. (MLO 1.7)
- Evaluate the impact of social institutions and the print media on the behavior of individuals and groups. (MLO 1.9)

## #2 History

**Students will examine significant ideas, beliefs, and themes; organize patterns and events; and analyze how individuals and societies have changed over time in Maryland, the United States, and the world.**

- Describe pro-slavery and anti-slavery positions and explain how debates over slavery influenced politics and sectionalism. (MLO 2.1)

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**Suggested Background Reading**

"From Slave to Abolitionist: James W.C. Pennington of Washington County, Maryland" by Dean Herrin (provided)

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. Written by Herself : Electronic Edition, found at http://docsouth.unc.edu/jacobs/jacobs.html

## Suggested Activity

1. After dividing the background readings into appropriate sections, assign a portion of each reading to individual students or groups. Have each individual or group list the training, rights or freedoms mentioned or implied in their reading and state whether the training was given or denied to the slave.

2. By using information from the readings or from other research sources, have students determine an appropriate purchase price for a slave blacksmith in the 20-30 year old age range. ( Slave records including sale prices can be found at http://ftp.rootsweb.com/pub/usgenweb/la/afriamer/court/ebr1.txt)

3. Using the Blacksmith Ledger provided, have students calculate the average daily income of a typical 19th century blacksmith. Then determine how many days a slave blacksmith would have to work to earn his purchase price. Since the slave would have to earn this money working beyond the time required by his master, have students multiply the number of days by 12, the average number of hours worked in a day, to determine how many hours a slave would work to earn his purchase price. Lead students in a discussion speculating a realistic time frame for working the extra hours, considering time available for this work, i.e., days off and time beyond the regular work day.

4. After students speculate on the length of time required to earn the money for a blacksmith slave to purchase his freedom, lead them into a deeper discussion by interjecting the following questions:
   - Is it likely that the slave owner would grant a slave his freedom for the same price that he would be sold to another buyer?
   - Would the slave find it beneficial to "buy" the rights to act as a freeman on an annual basis, while remaining the property of his owner?
   - What is the likelihood that a blacksmith slave would have used his earnings to purchase his family's freedom rather than his own?
   - Would the slave owner been more or less likely to permit slaves to purchase their freedom before or after the Nat Turner Rebellion?
   - Would a slave owner have been likely to allow slaves to purchase their freedom after the start of the Civil War or after the Emancipation and Proclamation? (The Emancipation and Proclamation gave freedom to slaves in seceding states only, slavery was not abolished in Maryland until 1864.)

5. Select a group of students who will role-play the family of a slave blacksmith discussing their options for freedom and the possible consequences or outcomes of working for the purchase of individual family members versus escaping.

6. Have students write a letter from the slave owner to the slave explaining the slave's value to the owner and why he /she would or would not allow the slave to purchase his freedom.

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## Follow-up Activity

1. Encourage students to visit, or lead a field trip to a National Park Service site, i.e. Gettysburg NMP, Harpers Ferry NHP or Antietam NB to learn more about the slave experience and slave/master relationships. Log on to the National Park Service website at www.nps.gov as a starting point for vitual visits to additional National Park Service units that interpret the issues of slavery.

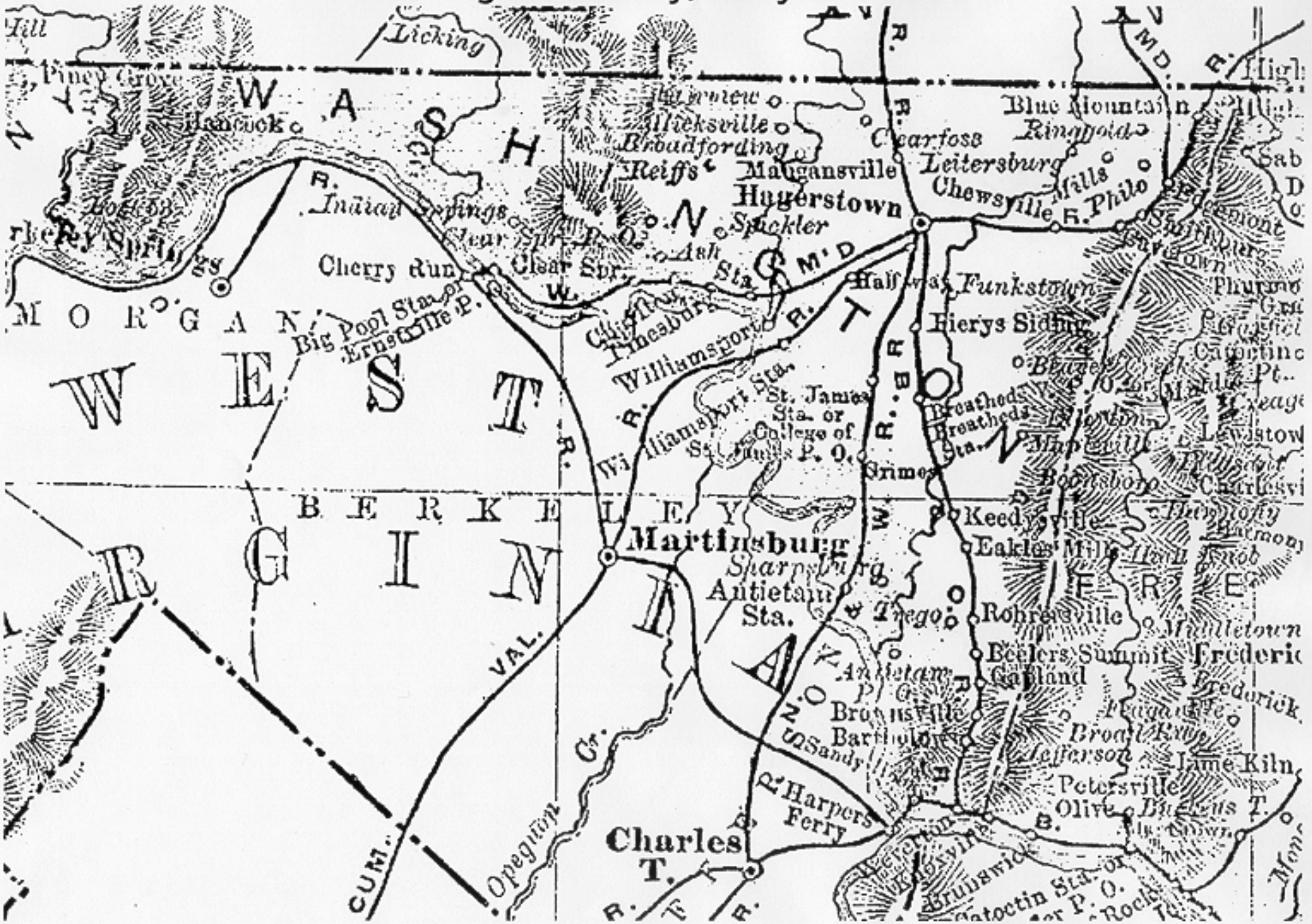
2. Have students read the complete versions of the suggested readings. Upon completion have them write an argumentative essay discussing the benefits or burdens that technical training reaped upon 18th century slaves.

3. J.C. Pennington's escape to freedom could have failed when he traveled east toward Baltimore instead of north to Pennsylvania. A map of Washington, County, Maryland taken from the 1895 U.S. Atlas is provided. (This map was found at www.livgenmi.com/washingtonMD.htm). Using this map, along with information from current maps that give names to land features, have students plot a more direct escape route for J. C. Pennington. Students will defend their route in a short paragraph accompanying the map. A successful route would stay away from population centers, and follow well-defined land forms. Students who apply what they already know will realize that J.C. Pennington should have known at least one route to Hagerstown and that slaves were allowed to travel away from the plantation on Sundays .

**Blacksmith's Daily Ledger**
**For B. Smith, June, 1842**
**(A fictitious compilation of entries from authentic ledgers from the era.)**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | to repair wagon | .13 |
| | to mend harrow teeth | .33 |
| | to repair caps pins | .07 |
| 2 | to making plaits | .05 |
| | to make and cut 15 bolts | .39 |
| | to shoe a horse | .20 |
| 3 | to 4 blind hooks | .14 |
| | to mend a hoe | .19 |
| | to toed sharp 4 shoes | .60 |
| 4 | to mend a fork | .09 |
| | to make and cut 9 bolts | .23 |
| | to repair wagon | .33 |
| 5 | to shoe a horse | .50 |
| | to shoe a horse | .60 |
| | to 3 rings and hooks and mend chain | .45 |
| 6 | to 6 clasps and staples | .60 |
| 7 | to make and cut 30 bolts | .83 |
| 8 | to shoe a horse and mend chain | 1.10 |
| 9 | to strap on wagon | .19 |
| | to shoe one old ox and mend staple | .26 |
| 10 | to cut and head 60 bolts | 1.60 |
| 11 | to sharpen plough irons | .30 |
| | to mending a pitch fork | .07 |
| | to shoe a horse | .40 |
| 12 | to mend cutter shoe | .16 |
| | to mend chains | .12 |
| | to 10 hooks and staples | .66 |
| 13 | to use of plow | .73 |
| | to toe and sett one show | .15 |
| 14 | to 2 hooks for chain | .18 |
| | to 1 new link and to mend chain | .19 |
| | to toe and sharp 4 shoes | .58 |
| 15 | to sharp and sett 3 shoes | .34 |
| | to repair centre pin and 6 rivets and hoop | .47 |
| | to mend tongs | .15 |
| | to mend wagon | .42 |

# Washington County, Maryland 1895



**From Slave to Abolitionist: James W. C. Pennington of Washington County, Maryland**

**Paper presented at the Millennium Crossroads Conference, Frederick Community College, Frederick, MD, September, 30, 2001**

Dean Herrin

Sunday, October 28, 1827, was Jim Pembroke's last day in Washington County, Maryland. A slave for all of his 21 years, Pembroke had decided the previous day to escape. Yet, as he sat alone that Sunday morning, awaiting the right moment to leave, he hesitated, and considered the difficulties of his decision. First and foremost, he was worried about his family. He would be leaving behind on the plantation not only his mother and his father, but also ten siblings, plus a beloved older brother nearby. What would become of them? Pembroke was well aware that it was a custom for families of runaways to be sold to the Deep South, before they had a chance to follow their kinsman. What, on the other hand, would happen to him if he failed? The consequences would no doubt be severe. Even if he managed to escape, he was unsure how to even get to Pennsylvania and freedom – he could only guess at the distance from his plantation to the state border, and he had little sense of direction, save for following the North Star. Years later, Pembroke wrote of his mental anguish that day:

> How the impression came to be upon my mind I cannot tell; but there was a strange and horrifying belief that, if I did not meet the crisis that day, I should be self-doomed - that my ear would be nailed to the door post forever. The emotions of that moment I cannot fully depict. Hope, fear, dread, terror, love, sorrow, and deep melancholy were mingled in my mind together; my mental state was one of most painful distraction. ...[B]ut the hour was now come, and the man must act and be free, or remain a slave forever. [1]

Pembroke put a piece of bread in his pocket, looked around his slave quarters one last time, and left behind Washington County and slavery forever.

Jim Pembroke's story is one of the great slave narratives of American history. After his escape, Pembroke changed his name to James William Charles Pennington, and against all odds, became one of the most distinguished and respected of all African American leaders of the nineteenth century.[2] We know about his early life as a slave primarily from his autobiography, published in 1849 as *The Fugitive Blacksmith, Or Events in the History of James W.C. Pennington*.[3] While Pennington's life as an abolitionist and a public figure is well known, few have examined his early years in Maryland. His story is certainly inspirational as one man's successful struggle against an evil institution, but it also tells us much about slavery and early African American history in mid-Maryland, as well as aspects of the cultural world of the ante-bellum white planter class in the region. His experiences in Washington County, moreover, were part and parcel of the influences that transformed Jim Pembroke the slave into James W.C. Pennington the gifted minister, abolitionist, and intellectual.

Pennington was born circa 1807 – no one is certain of the date – in Queen Anne's County on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. His mother, Nelly Pembroke, and therefore Pennington, were slaves to James Tilghman, a judge on Maryland's Court of Appeals and the state's first Attorney General. Pennington's father, Bazil, was owned by a different slaveholder on a nearby plantation. When James Tilghman died in 1809, his will was administered by his eldest surviving son, Frisby Tilghman. Frisby several years earlier had emigrated from Queen Anne's County to Washington County in mid-Maryland, a wheat-growing region that was one of the most rapidly expanding sections of the state. After settling his father's affairs, Frisby Tilghman returned to his Washington County estate, Rockland, with Nelly and her two sons Robert and Jim. Pennington's father was thus

separated from his family by over 200 miles, but Tilghman soon thereafter purchased Bazil and brought him also to Rockland.[4]

Pennington did not know it at the time of course, but he had been inherited by one of Washington County's leading citizens. Frisby Tilghman had once studied to be a doctor, but after marrying into a prominent local family, the Ringgolds, he became a wheat farmer and an active participant in the civic life of his adopted region. He represented Washington County four times in Maryland's House of Delegates, served as a justice in the county's Orphans Court, formed and commanded a local militia company, helped to found the first agricultural society in the county as well as an academy in Hagerstown, championed the building of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal and other internal improvements in the region, served on the board of directors of local banks, and was influential as one of the more progressive farmers in the region.[5]

Pennington recalled in his memoirs that Tilghman normally had a kind disposition, but was a strict disciplinarian with his slaves and was ever vigilant to extinguish any sign of autonomy from them. Tilghman, for example, was an instigator of several laws in the county concerning the control of slaves, including one which prohibited slaves from going over a certain number of miles from their plantation on Sundays, when they were traditionally allowed to visit family members on nearby plantations. He also once had authorities disband a local Sunday school for free blacks which had been established by Methodist and Lutheran churches lest, according to Pennington, "the slaves should get some benefit of it." Tilghman's treatment of Pennington and his family, as we shall see, sparked Pennington's later determination to flee.[6]

As a young boy, Pennington helped his parents as much as he could around the plantation, until at around age eight or nine, he and his older brother Robert were hired out by Tilghman to learn trades. As in many other slave areas, there was a custom in the region for slaveowners to apprentice a few of their young slaves to tradesmen, in order for the slaves to learn a skill that could later be used on the plantation. Pennington was placed with a stonemason in Hagerstown, six miles from Tilghman's plantation. Pennington's brother Robert was apprenticed to a different tradesman in the same town, and since neither Pennington's nor his brother's employer were slaveowners themselves, the two boys enjoyed for a brief time relative freedom. Pennington stayed with the stonemason for about three years, and then returned home. His new skills were immediately employed in helping to erect a new blacksmith shop for the plantation. Tilghman's blacksmith was a slave who had learned his trade just as Pennington had learned stonemasonry, and Pennington was placed in the new shop to learn that craft. He worked as a blacksmith on Tilghman's plantation for nine years, and took great pride in his work. He wrote in his autobiography that this craftsman's pride was one of the things that reconciled him so long to being a slave: "I sought to distinguish myself in the finer branches of the business by invention and finish; I frequently tried my hand at making guns and pistols, putting blades in penknives, making fancy hammers, hatchets, swordcanes, etc., etc."[7]

But Pennington found little else in the life of a slave to give him satisfaction. In *The Fugitive Blacksmith*, he described aspects of the slave's life in Washington County. Compared with the tobacco-growing regions of eastern Maryland, western Maryland had comparatively few slaves. Still, at about the time Pennington was brought to Washington County, there were over 2600 people in bondage in the county, and that number increased

to over 3200 by 1820. In that year, slaves accounted for 14% of Washington County's total population, which was comparable to neighboring Frederick County, where slaves made up 16% of the population. By comparison, slaves composed 26% of the population for the entire state. The number of slaves in the county declined thereafter until slavery was abolished in the state in 1864. The number of free blacks in the county, on the other hand, increased until in 1860, on the eve of the Civil War, there were more free blacks than enslaved blacks.[8]

Slavery, however, was manifested in Washington County through more than just the numbers of slaves. According to Thomas J.C. Williams' *History of Washington County, Maryland*, Hagerstown was always a noted slave market – slave catchers from throughout the southern states lurked in the county to catch fugitive slaves trying to escape to Pennsylvania. Once caught, many of these slaves were then sold at auction in Hagerstown to buyers from the Deep South. In his three years in Hagerstown, Pennington likely witnessed a few of these auctions.[9]

The prevailing attitude toward slavery in Washington County was recounted by Pennington in his retelling of the Gruber trial of 1819. Jacob Gruber was a Pennsylvania minister who, at a camp meeting near Tilghman's Rockland estate in 1818, delivered a sermon in which several Washington County slaveowners accused him of inciting slaves to rebel from their masters. Gruber was successfully defended, however, by Roger Brooke Taney, then a lawyer in Frederick County and the future author of the *Dred Scott* decision, in one of history's interesting ironies. Pennington claimed that his owner Frisby Tilghman was one of the planters behind Gruber's arrest. He also recounted meeting in 1848 a slave from the region who still remembered Gruber's sermon.[10]

Pennington recalled in his book many details of how slaves in Washington County lived, touching upon foodways, religion, and clothing, for example, but he was understandably more interested in describing for readers the cruelties of slavery. Remember that Pennington wrote his autobiography in 1849, when slavery was still legal. In the Preface of his book, he particularly criticized people who spoke of a "mild" form of slavery.

> My feelings are always outraged when I hear them speak of 'kind masters,' 'Christian masters,' 'the mildest form of slavery,' 'well fed and clothed slaves,' as extenuations of slavery; I am satisfied they either mean to pervert the truth, or they do not know what they say. The being of slavery, its soul and body, lives and moves in the chattel principle, the property principle, the bill of sale principle; the cart-whip, starvation, and nakedness, are its inevitable consequences to a greater or less extent…[11]

Pennington cited many examples throughout his book to illustrate the cruelty and barbarity of slavery, even of the so-called mild kind. He witnessed slave children sold from the plantation to the Deep South, men and women flogged, a slave struck with a pitchfork by an overseer, and slaves shot. One slave tried to run from one of Frisby Tilghman's overseers who was about to beat him with a club. The overseer grabbed a gun and shot the slave, hitting him in the legs. The slave managed to hide in the nearby woods, but the pain forced him to surrender that night. Tilghman did not immediately tend to his wounds, but had him locked up that night, and in the morning, had the overseer tie him down and flog him - only then did Tilghman pick the shot out of the slave's leg. In another example, one of Tilghman's sons coveted a young slave woman on the plantation. As a result, to save the honor of the son, Tilghman sold the slave to a buyer from Georgia, even though her parents pleaded with him to allow them to arrange a local sale.[12]

Pennington and his family did not escape the wrath of Tilghman and his overseers, either, and one particular incident produced a turning point in Pennington's conception of himself and his situation. Tilghman allowed his slaves who had families on other nearby plantations to leave on Saturday night to go to their families, but they had to be back early on Monday morning. Three of his field hands were not back one particular Monday morning, and Tilghman was very angry. Pennington's father was tending a lamb that morning on the plantation, and Tilghman vented his anger at Bazil. When Bazil replied in a way that Tilghman felt was insolent, he took out a cowhide whip and, in Pennington's words:

> ...fell upon him with most savage cruelty, and inflicted fifteen or twenty severe stripes with all his strength, over his shoulders and the small of his back. As he raised himself upon his toes, and gave the last stripe, he said, 'by the *** I will make you know that I am master of your tongue as well as of your time!'

Pennington was near enough, he wrote, to "hear, see, and even count the savage stripes inflicted upon" his father.[13]

Pennington recalled that this incident created "an open rupture" within his family, as "each member felt the deep insult that had been inflicted upon our head: the spirit of the whole family was roused; we talked of it in our nightly gatherings, and showed it in our daily melancholy aspect." And did this cause Tilghman to regret his actions? On the contrary.. "The oppressor saw this, and with the heartlessness that was in perfect keeping with the first insult, commenced a series of tauntings, threatenings, and insinuations, with a view to crush the spirit of the whole family."[14]

Pennington's response was a portent of his later actions. "Although it was some time after this event before I took the decisive step, yet in my mind and spirit, I never was a *Slave* after it." He particularly never forgot the symbolism in the stark contrast between

the gentleness of his father's caring for the lamb and the cruelty of Tilghman. Pennington now despised Tilghman, and the slaveowner, knowing this, sought incidents in which he could punish the young man.[15]

Soon afterward, Pennington made his decision to emancipate himself by running away. On the afternoon of October 28, 1827, he left Rockland as if to visit his brother in Hagerstown. But once there, as night was falling, he kept walking, thinking only of freedom. In his story, Pennington remembered his feelings that night:

> I felt like a mariner who has gotten his ship outside of the harbor and has spread his sails to the breeze. The cargo is on board - the ship is cleared - and the voyage I must make; besides, this being my first night, almost everything will depend upon my clearing the coast before the day dawns. In order to do this my flight must be rapid. I therefore set forth in sorrowful earnest, only now and then I was cheered by the *wild* hope, that I should somewhere and at some time be free.[16]

Unfortunately, Pennington's fears about direction were well-founded, for after two nights of walking, hiding in cornfields, and eating little, he found himself at a toll gate of the National Pike, only eighteen miles from Baltimore. Much to his dismay, he realized he had traveled east instead of north. But his troubles were only beginning. Pennington was soon captured near Reisterstown by a local farmer who suspected him of being a runaway. He managed to buy himself time by claiming to have been part of a gang of slaves that had contracted smallpox. Eventually he found a way to escape, and continued on his journey to Pennsylvania. Six days after leaving Washington County, he finally entered Pennsylvania near Littlestown in Adams County. There, he was taken in by William and Phoebe Wright, a local Quaker family, and sheltered for six months.[17]

Frisby Tilghman, meanwhile, upon discovering Pennington's departure, immediately placed an advertisement in the local papers. Tilghman was none too happy to

lose a slave so skilled as Pennington. His ad offered a $200 reward for Pennington, and described him as "about 21 years of age, five feet, five inches high, very black, square & clumsily made, has a down look, prominent and reddish eyes, and mumbles or talks with his teeth closed, can read, and I believe write, is an excellent blacksmith, and pretty good rough carpenter." Tilghman did not give up looking for Pennington. Over a year later Tilghman was still placing ads in newspapers in Lancaster and Philadelphia looking for his fugitive blacksmith.[18]

William Wright was a former schoolmaster, and while Pennington stayed in Littlestown, he began teaching Pennington how to read and write. As a slave, Pennington had spent many Sundays in his blacksmith shop, secretly studying the writing in the daybook kept by the shop's overseer. He had even fashioned a crude steel pen and had made ink from berries to practice writing. So he was an avid learner, and he always lamented what slavery had deprived him:

> There is one sin that slavery committed against me which I never can forgive. It robbed me of my education; the injury is irreparable; I feel the embarrassment more seriously now than I ever did before. It cost me two years' hard labor, after I fled, to unshackle my mind; it was three years before I had purged my language of slavery's idioms; it was four years before I had thrown off the crouching aspect of slavery…[19]

Pennington soon left the Wrights, as Littlestown was too near the Maryland border, and he eventually arrived in New York City, and the beginning of a long career as a minister, teacher, abolitionist, writer, and international figure. One historian has written that Pennington was "one of the most distinguished of all fugitives from bondage," and another referred to him as "one of the most educated and literate black men of his time." Pennington became a minister in Presbyterian churches in New York and Hartford, was

elected a delegate to several international abolition conventions, founded the American Missionary Association, wrote in 1841 one of the first histories of Africans in America, lectured widely, led the struggle to desegregate New York City's public transit system, fought for the right of blacks to vote, and remained active in the Underground Railroad. In 1849, the University of Heidelberg awarded Pennington a Doctor of Divinity degree in honor of his achievements. His autobiography, also first published in 1849, has been called one of the ten most important slave narratives, and, as has been noted by literary historians, provided Mark Twain with several good ideas. *The Fugitive Blacksmith* went through three editions in eleven months, selling over 6,000 copies.[20]

The title of Pennington's book was apt, for he was technically still a fugitive in 1849. Pennington's friends had tried earlier in the 1840s to purchase his freedom and that of his parents from Tilghman, but negotiations had failed. With the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850, which placed new dangers on all runaways, Pennington's very freedom was at stake. Frisby Tilghman died in 1847, and the administrator of his estate let it be known that $150 would buy Pennington's freedom. Abolitionists in Scotland raised the money, and in June of 1851, Pennington was technically a free man for the first time in his life.[21]

Many members of his family were not so lucky. Several were sold further south, a few managed to eventually escape to Canada, and others remained slaves in Washington County. One brother, Stephen, ran away from his Sharpsburg, Maryland, owner along with his two sons in 1854. Through the underground railroad network, they made their way to Pennington in New York. But slavecatchers were on their trail, and Stephen and his sons were captured after less than 24 hours in the city. Stephen's two sons were

immediately sold to a North Carolina lumber merchant, but Pennington was able to raise enough money to eventually purchase Stephen.[22]

Prior to Frisby Tilghman's death, Pennington wrote a remarkable letter to his former owner. How many letters do we have from former slaves to their formers owners? In this letter from 1844, Pennington turned the slave/master relationship on its head. Pennington warned Tilghman that he was an old man and would probably die soon, and he would have to stand "at the awful bar of the impartial Judge." He reminded his former owner that he would meet his former slaves, including Pennington, at that bar.

> They will all meet you at that bar. Uncle James True, Charles Cooper, Aunt Jenny, and the native Africans; Jeremiah, London, and Donmore, have already gone ahead, and only wait your arrival – Sir, I shall meet you there. The account between us for the first twenty years of my life, will have a definite character upon which one or the other will be able to make out a case.[23]

Most significantly, Pennington wrote, "I called you master when I was with you from the mere force of circumstances; but I never regarded you as my master." Pennington had emancipated himself.[24]

Slavery is not an easy topic to study, yet it is a significant if tragic part of our history in the mid-Maryland region, and by studying such people as James W.C. Pennington and Frisby Tilghman, we will start to fill in that mosaic that is our complex past. Pennington's story is only one of many. We need to discover the others.

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[2] For Pennington's life, see R.J.M. Blackett, *Beating Against the Barriers, Biographical Essays in Nineteenth-Century Afro-American History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), 1-84; Herman E. Thomas, *James W. C. Pennington, African American Churchman and Abolitionist* (New York: Garland, 1995).
[3] Pennington's autobiography has been reprinted in Bontemps, and in Yuval Taylor, ed., *I Was Born a Slave, An Anthology of Classic Slave Narratives, Volume Two, 1849-1866* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill, 1999), 104-158.
[4] Pennington, *Fugitive*, 207; Blackett, *Beating*, 1-2; Thomas, *James W.C. Pennington*, 37.
[5] Blackett, *Beating*, 2; Thomas J. C. Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland* (Baltimore: Clearfield Co., 1992 [1906]), 561; J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Western Maryland* (2 vols.; Baltimore: Regional Publishing Co., 1968 [1882]), II, 1286-7.
[6] Pennington, *Fugitive,* 212-3, 257.
[7] Pennington, *Fugitive,* 209, 212.
[8] Gary Jacobs, "Slavery in Washington County, Maryland" (Honors Paper, Hood College, 1978), 48-49.
[9] Williams, *Washington County*, 250.
[10] Pennington, *Fugitive*, 255; for Gruber, see W.P. Strickland, *The Life of Jacob Gruber* (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1860), and John B. Boles, "Tension in a Slave Society: The Trial of the Reverend Jacob Gruber," *Southern Studies* XVIII (Summer, 1979):179-197.
[11] Pennington, *Fugitive*, 253-4, 196.
[12] Pennington, *Fugitive*, 212-13, 197.
[13] Pennington, *Fugitive*, 209-11.
[14] Pennington, *Fugitive*, 211.
[15] Pennington, *Fugitive*, 211.
[16] Pennington, *Fugitive*, 217.
[17] Pennington, *Fugitive*, 216-35; Blackett, *Beating*, 4; William Still, *The Underground Railroad* (New York: Arno, 1968 [1872]),pp.691-93.
[18] Blackett, *Beating*, 4-5; (Hagerstown, MD) *Torchlight and Public Advertiser*, 13 December 1827, and 5 February 1829.
[19] Pennington, *Fugitive*, 236-37, 246.
[20] Yuval Taylor, *I Was Born a Slave,* 104; Horatio T. Strother, *The Underground Railroad in Connecticut* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University, 1962), p.145; for Pennington's career, see sources in note 2; for Twain, see, Lucinda H. MacKethan, "Huck Finn and the Slave Narratives," *Southern Review* 20 (April 1984): 252-57; on the success of *Fugitive Blacksmith*, see Blackett, *Beating*, 42.
[21] Pennington, *Fugitive*, 250-51; Strother, *Underground Railroad in Connecticut*, 145-149; John Hooker, *Some Reminiscences of a Long Life* (Hartford: Belknap & Warfield, 1899), pp.38-41.
[22] Pennington, *Fugitive*, 248; Blackett, *Beating,* 32; *Laws Made and Passed by the General Assembly of the State of Maryland* (Annapolis: William M'Neir, 1842), Chapter 67 [n.p.], "An Act for the Relief of Frisby Tilghman of Washington County;" Still, *Underground Railroad*, 173-4.
[23] Pennington, *Fugitive*, 266.
[24] Pennington, *Fugitive*, 263.